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of opinions with the news articles themselves. The newspaper is here—by a large majority; and it has undoubtedly come to stay. Its precise force and influence as a factor in civilization it is hard to estimate with accuracy. That it is capable of betterment not even the most enthusiastic “journalist” will presume to deny. Let me close by suggesting one or two of the lines along which the needed improvements ought to proceed. There should be less crudity and more care in the style and form in which the news is expressed. Condensation must be studied, and the art of putting much in small space acquired. The expression of editorial opinions may wisely be confined within narrow limits; unless, indeed, the newspaper is to become what it concededly is not now—the leader and moulder of public opinion. The daily newspaper need not seek to be a cyclopædia of all that is going on in the world: leave to the special and technical journals each its own field. The real news of the world is necessarily an expanding quantity, and hence the newspaper of the future must become more and more eclectic, if it is to be kept within reasonable and *readable* limits. Above all, let readers remember that the journal which they subscribe for and make a practice of reading may be to a very large extent—much larger, probably, than most of them imagine—moulded by themselves, and made what they would wish it to be. The inalienable right of fault-finding is every reader’s own, and editors wince under the criticism that is severe, but at the same time friendly. If any reader of this article questions my statement, he need only try the experiment himself to be convinced.

JULIAN PROCTOR.

IV.

ABOLISHING POVERTY—ON PAPER.

IT BEGINS to look very much as though neither Henry George nor Dr. McGlynn will succeed for some years to come in abolishing poverty. I recall the old story of the ardent Irish patriot, who, a few years since, was telling a visiting tourist in the Green Isle how many hundred thousand armed men there were in Ireland ready at a moment’s notice to free their beloved country from the rule of the English oppressor. “Well, why don’t they go ahead and do it?” was the natural question of the tourist. “Begorra,” replied Paddy, in entire good faith, “the police won’t let them.” So, when we ask Mr. George and Dr. McGlynn why they do not go ahead and abolish poverty, they virtually reply that society will not let them; which is only another way of acknowledging that their scheme is impracticable—a fact which every sane man knew from the start.

Undeterred, however, by the signal failure of these earnest but mistaken men, I have decided to come forward with a little scheme of my own for abolishing poverty; not, indeed, at once, as will be seen, but in the course of about two hundred and fifty years. My scheme, in brief, is for those who are most anxious to abolish poverty to raise the sum of ten thousand dollars in cash, or more if possible, and put it out at compound interest, until the principal shall become so immense that the interest annually accruing from it will be large enough to change the whole face of society. In order to bring the matter more nearly home to us to-day, let us suppose that some wise philanthropist, say in the year 1629, had set aside that sum of money, with the proviso that neither principal nor interest should be touched until the year 1889, at which time the whole amount should be safely invested and the interest forever after devoted to the alleviation of poverty and to such other humane objects as should commend themselves to a wisely-selected board of Anti-Poverty trustees, two of whom might, perhaps, be Mr. George and Dr. McGlynn. I venture to say that the actual money result to-day of such a fund would far surpass the wildest dreams of the crankiest Anti-Poverty disciple in the world.

As thus, for instance: Assuming that, when put out at compound interest, the principal doubles itself every fifteen years,—no very extravagant assumption,—the ten thousand dollars invested in 1629 would to-day amount to the inconceivably enormous sum of One Hundred and Eighty-four Billions, Two Hundred and Seven Millions, Three Hundred and Sixty Thousand Dollars! And this sum invested at the rate of 4 per cent. would yield an annual income of Seven Billions, Three Hundred

and Sixty-eight Millions, Two Hundred and Twenty-four Thousand, Four Hundred Dollars, which sum, be it remembered, would be available every year in perpetuity for the noble but misty objects of the Anti-Poverty Society. But in order to allow for leakages, and to avoid the consideration of a cumbrous number, let us make our interest an even five billion dollars a year instead of the seven-odd billions just mentioned as the actual interest of our fund. What then will we able to do with this great income?

First of all, we notice the fact that five billions of dollars is just about half the money in active circulation in the civilized world. This means that half of the work done in the world would be done under the auspices and for the sole benefit of our supposed Anti-Poverty Society. Moreover, a large proportion of the capitalists and employers of labor in the civilized world would be simply the agents of the Anti-Poverty Society. The banks and other institutions which now lend money would find much, if not all, of their business gone. For the Anti-Poverty Society would virtually own the earth and everything thereon, and would, therefore, be the greatest lending institution in the world. It could exact its own terms of interest, and controlling, as it would, most of the labor, the money, and commodities of the world, it would have absolute power to control the property of the world in accordance with its principles. The capitalist, the man of business, the retired man of wealth, and the workingman, all would be paying a percentage out of their income to this great autocrat of human destiny. It would, however, at once strike a snag that might—nay, that would—prove fatal to the society, unless it succeeded in making over this human nature of ours. The strong-brained, acquisitive men, whose very nature it is to work with both brain and hand in order to acquire wealth, would lose heart and stop working. On the other hand, an immense number, possibly a majority, of the world's workingmen, knowing that the Society would provide for them anyhow, would also stop working. Or, if they worked at all, it would be in a listless way that would be of little value. So, therefore, the world's industries would come to a sudden and disastrous stand-still, and at the end of the year the five billion dollars of interest due the Anti-Poverty Society would not be paid on account of the general cessation of work. And there would be no way to enforce the payment, unless all the civilized governments of the world should unite to do it. But even that would not avail if the debtors did not have the money to meet their obligations, for you cannot squeeze blood out of a stone.

Take away from men the hope that they may possibly better themselves some day or other—a hope that is latent in nearly every human breast—and you would at once destroy all human progress. Cruel as the principle of competition is,—and it is very cruel,—it is, nevertheless, a fundamental principle in any human society that is possible in the world as at present constituted. With all the inequalities for which it is responsible, civilization thrives under it. It has led men up out of barbarism to at least some semblance of a noble humanity. And no quicker road to intellectual death and social chaos could be found than the withdrawal of this mighty principle from the sum total of human life.

But we will suppose that our Society has successfully got around this difficulty. Somehow or other, everybody is happy and contented, as the hired agents of the Anti-Poverty Society. The banker and the merchant turn over their profits to the Society, receiving in lieu of them whatever the Society thinks fit to give them as wages. And the toilers of the world in the mines, in the factories, in the workshops, and on the farms continue to work just as hard, although they know that, being poor men, the great Anti-Poverty Society will see that they get their "share" whether they work or not. All right; now let us consider what the Society will do with its five billions of dollars a year. First of all, if it wanted to clear off our national slate, it could pay our national debt and the immense national debt of Great Britain out of one year's income, and then have enough left to wipe out the debt of the city of New York. And if it cared about indulging in such works of supererogation, it could in a very few years pay off the national debt of every nation in the world. But perhaps it might be thought that this would be only an indirect way of abolishing poverty, and so we will not consider it. In the next place, it might buy great ter-

ritories of fertile land to give to the landless. To be sure, the vast majority of the landless could have land to-day if they would go where it is. But, as we know, they do not want land unless it comes in the form of a corner lot in a big city with a big house on it. But the Anti-Poverty Society has declared that the landless must and shall have land, and so we will suppose it bought for them. Perhaps when they understood that they would have a perpetual claim on the income of the Society so long as they remained poor, they would consent to occupy the land which was decided to be their share, simply as gentlemen of leisure. But inasmuch as the Society would sternly refuse to help them the moment they became well-to-do, we may be quite sure that they would not work much; for if they worked, they might happen to become well-to-do. And then they would not only cease to be protégés of that human Providence, the Anti-Poverty Society, but they would be making some other men poor. For rich men necessarily imply poor men, in the present order of things.

It is true that, with such an income as we are considering, an Anti-Poverty Society could do much to diminish vice and crime. It could, for instance, buy up all the intoxicating liquors of the world, and hire the manufacturers not to make any more. But that would not stop the drinking habit. In some way, the men who wanted liquor would either make it or get it in spite of the Society. Or, again, the Society could establish and endow a large number of agencies for the education and reformation of the people. But even that would not bring on the millennium. Human nature would continue to be about what it is to-day—composite in its character, with the good and the bad so inextricably woven together that they can never be entirely separated.

What our doctrinaire social reformers would value most highly would be the opportunity to give the "under dogs" in our social life a chance, by giving them their "share" of the world's good things. But when it came to applying this glittering generality to concrete cases, they would get into trouble at once. For instance, do the men who run up our immense national drink-bill deserve any more money than they already get? As a matter of social ethics, do they really deserve the money they now earn? Then as to the immense number of men in the world with very slender abilities, or with no abilities at all, ought they to get as much as the men with great abilities? Still again, would it be either good policy or good morals to give anything out of a general fund to the great army of lazy and vicious men and women? And lastly, supposing that some little junta of social reformers were able to-day to make an absolutely equal division of the property of the world without any reference to the individual endowments of men, how long would it be before the old inequalities would again appear?

I started out with proposing a plan for abolishing poverty. But, after all, I find that my scheme will not work. Instead of abolishing poverty, it would make everybody poor, and not only poor but hopeless. An autocrat, or a committee of autocrats, with an absolute power to control and distribute the wealth of the world, could do little or nothing to put an end to the inequalities between men. On the contrary, by their unwise, though well-meant, interference with the great laws of social economy, they would soon impair, if not destroy, the whole structure of civilization.

JAMES B. WASSON.

V.

"THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE."

IN A recent article in THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW—"The Open Gate of Dreamland"—I narrated some observed facts of hypnotism, which had led me to the belief that mind-reading and all forms of "thought-transference" were delusions. Dr. Post in a later number traverses my conclusion, and suggests that it "may be premature," and founded on my not having witnessed phenomena observed by others.

With this position I have no controversy, for towards the unknowable—or perhaps it were wiser to say the unknown—I am an agnostic. But you will permit me to add